

News from the Feminist Caucus:

**Annual Report (2008–2009)
Feminist Caucus of the League
of the Canadian Poets**

By Anne Burke, Chair

At the 2008 agm, new panel topics were brought forward, “Feminism in Canadian Poetry”; National Poetry Month, e.g. Eco Poetry/Urban; Poets & Music (composers); Environmental Work—Di Brandt, Nancy Holmes—Nature Poems in the works: Sustainability.” The panel topic chosen was “Eco Poetry: Experimentation”. Magie Dominic, who suggested the topic, agreed to organize the 2009 agm. In addition to Magie, Cathy Ford, Anne Burke, Catherine Owen, and Andrea Nicki agreed to contribute papers.

As to the finances of the Living Archives Series, in 2009, there was earned revenue in sales of \$258. Printing, postage, and book launch fee were donated. There was earned revenue sales of \$348 in 2008 (\$461 in 2007). According to the 2008 audited statements, Note 8, the cumulative revenues and expenses, since the beginning of the year ended March 31, 1997, are as follows: Total Cumulative Revenues of \$5,050 for 2008 (\$4,702 in 2007) and Total Cumulative Expenses of \$2661 in 2008 (\$2661 in 2007), for a positive balance forward of \$2,389 (\$2041 in 2007). The bottom line for 2009 is a positive balance of \$2647.

This is a summary of monthly reports which are posted on the League website, under “News From the Feminist Caucus”. Of the Living Archives Chapbook Series, *Women Poets in Canadian History*, edited by Kathy Mac, the 2007 panel, was launched at the 2008 agm. The Fem Caucus minutes of the 2008 agm were posted on the League website, in July. Three projects were announced.:
1) A proposal to honour what would have been Pat Lowther’s 75th Birthday, in 2010, by Toby Brooks, author of *Pat Lowther’s Continent: Her Life and Works* (Gynergy, 2000). Be it resolved that the Feminist Caucus supports the exploration of a celebration of Pat Lowther, in 2010, in conjunction with the League of Canadian Poets Poetry Festival,

and that Mary Ellen Csamer and Sonja Greckol will explore the possibilities (funding, needs to be in Toronto, etc). Carried.

2) The Living Archives Chapbook Series will be launching “Femin/Aged Inspirators”, with texts from Magie Dominic, Penn Kemp, and Susan McMaster, at the 2009 agm Book Launch.

3a) Moved that the Feminist Caucus approves of donating its papers, its historical archives to the National Library and Archives, Ottawa, by December 2009, Carried.

3 b) The Feminist Caucus appoints Susan McMaster to carry this Archives project forward, Carried. The due date for the Caucus Archives is December 2009.

An e-list was established to improve communication, based on the sign-in sheet at the agm. A website page was designed for the Feminist Caucus and added to the League website. During the summer, 2008, there was an inventory done of titles in The Living Archives Series of Chapbooks (containing the proceedings of The Feminist Caucus annual panels, with additional materials.) Some back copies are still available and there are also master sheets from others. Coutts Library Services has been ordering them for libraries.

Be it resolved that the Feminist Caucus support the scholarly database of women writers in Canada and that the League of Canadian Poets provide a letter of support, in principle, by September 2008. Moved by Sonja Greckol and Seconded by Cathy Ford. Sonja offered to coordinate. This was accomplished. The Women’s Writing In Canada Project was spearheaded by the University of Alberta. The initial phase of the project is envisioned as building on the on-line biographic information about women poets which is included on the League’s website, using much the same terms: a biographical sketch which includes the standard information. This includes date of birth and place of birth, education, career as a poet and other information relating to career (such as information about how the individual earns her living, given that poetry is not the most lucrative of professions.) Perhaps the clearest way of understanding the biographic component is that each would be a profile of the poet which is factual rather than evaluating the poet and her work. Additionally, the profile would include bibliographic information for published collections

and individual poems which might appear in journals. The bibliographic information is within the public domain and so does not infringe on the poet's privacy nor her receiving royalties. If, in the context of a profile, some portion of poem is included, the inclusion will be on terms that meet copyright which allows for inclusion of short excerpts (usually two or three lines.”

The advantage for the poets---and the League of Canadian Poets more broadly---is that the tagging allows searches through various categories which are not currently available. So, by searching using one or more of the tags, it will be possible for researchers to create groupings. The profiles (including bibliographic information) will be open-access and so anyone can access the information and its searches through the project's website. It offers a remarkable tool for heightening attention to their work by allowing researchers to access information, and to group it, with ease. A researcher will be able to access profiles and bibliographic information relating to women writers, beginning with poets

(League), the Playwright's Union, and, hopefully, the Writers' Union of Canada.

“The League of Canadian Poets is eager to offer in principle support for the scholarly database Women's Writing in Canada. While the LCP speaks specifically on behalf of our membership, it is also in our interest to support the project on behalf of all writers. We know from historical experience that women's writings have been lost and undervalued. This project can address historical gaps, as well as identify contemporary authors who languish unknown to many of us.

We offer support in principle since there are issues that are of concern to us around privacy and copyright in particular. We recognize that you are also aware of these. At the moment, we understand that the project is collecting factual biographical and bibliographical information and publications that are already in the public domain, etc.”

A new title, based on “Femin/Age Inspirators”, with texts from Magie Dominic, Penn Kemp, and Susan McMaster, was prepared and printed. In August, a report on The Simone de Beauvoir Institute which celebrates the Centenary of its namesake's birthday, as well as 30 years of Women's Studies and

community activism. Some new titles to watch for: *The Women's Page: Journalism and Rhetoric in Early Canada*, by Janice Fiamengo; *Comrades and Critics: Women, Literature, and the Left in 1930s*, by Candida Rifkind; *Women's Health in Canada: Critical Perspectives on Theory and Policy*, edited by Marina Morrow, et al.; *The Person's Case: The Origins and Legacy of the Fight for Legal Personhood*, by Robert J. Sharpe and Patricia I. McMahon.

A Report on Gloria Alvernaz Mulcahy, editor and contributor to *Sisters in Spirit*, about The Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women and Children, at the University of Western Ontario, a collaborative venture of the University of Western Ontario, the London Coordinating Committee to End Woman Abuse, and Fanshawe College.

Commemoration of what would have been Pat Lowther's 73rd Birthday, “Earth, Air, Stone and Pat Lowther”, at Mother Tongue Bookstore, on 30 July 2008, in Ottawa.

Six Ottawa poets paid tribute to Pat by reading their work and hers, while emphasizing a green theme. Participating poets were: Ronnie Brown, Michelle Desbarats, Colin Morton, Susan McMaster, Susan Robertson and E. Russell Smith. History of the Tributes: Toby Brooks, with the help of Blaine Marchand, organized the first, held at the League 1995 agm. The next two birthday tributes were held in private gardens in Toronto. 2004, at Mother Tongues Books. In 2005, Coast-to-Coast Birthday Readings (in Newfoundland, Ottawa, Edmonton, and Vancouver.)

Review of *Mothers On The Fast Track: How a New Generation Can Balance Family and Careers*, by Mary Ann Mason and Eve Mason Ekman
Contemplations on the Lowther Prize, speculation about how many winners of the Lowther also won The Governor General's Award.

Review of *Women Speak Out About Violence: Standing Together*, edited by Linda Goyette.

Thank you to my fellow judges, Lori Cayer and Audrey McLaren.

Submissions to the Pat Lowther Award, 2009, numbered 79 titles. The list of entries, by author and publisher, were published online and arranged alphabetically by title and implied no ranking whatsoever.

Lori Cayer is the Poetry Editor for CV2. Her book of poems *Stealing Mercury* (The Muses' Company) won for Best First Book in Manitoba, in 2004, and was nominated for Most Promising Manitoba Writer 2004 (which she won in 2005) and Book of the Year, 2004. She co-founded the Lansdowne Prize for Poetry, now part of the Manitoba Writing and Publishing Awards. loritodd@mts.net

Audrey McLaren published her first collection of poems, *Bareface Pickney*, in 1999; a revised edition (Cultural Waves) in 2006. This was followed by *I am the Djembe*, (Cultural Waves) in 2007. She edited and published some of her students' work in *The Power of Words*. mclarenaudrey@hotmail.com and Info@culturalwaves.com.

Review of *Dissonant Disabilities: Women with Chronic Illness Explore Their Lives*, by Diane Driedger; *Study in Grey: Women Writing About Depression*, edited by Wynne Edwards and Shirley Serviss.

Review of *Two Hemispheres*, by Nadine McInnis. Summary of Previous Winners of the Pat Lowther Memorial Award for 1981 when M. Travis Lane as the first recipient with her *Divinations and Short Poems 1973-1978*. Heather Spears won in 1987, 1989, and 2002. Bronwen Wallace and Diana Brebner in 1984 and 1994, respectively. Lorna Crozier won in 1991 and 1996

An account of The Famous Five Foundation, The Nellie McClung House was declared a Municipal Historic Resource for its architectural and historical merit. In doing this, it will be saved from demolition. The *Calgary Herald* published an account "100 Years Ago", an editorial from 1909, seven years before Alberta women won the vote, and nine years before Louise McKinney and Roberta McAdams became Alberta MLAs. Re: The Suffragette Movement, there is an accompanying photograph from the Glenbow Archives of Margaret Lewis who organized the first suffrage society in Calgary in 1913

Review of *Radicalized Bodies, Disabling Worlds: Stories, Lives of Immigrant Muslim Women*, by Parin Dossa. *Policing and Gendered Justice: Examining the Possibilities*, by Marilyn Corsianos; *Making Work, Making Trouble: The Social Regulation of Sexual Labour*, by Deborah R. Brock.; *Public Policy for Women: The State,*

Income Security, and Labour Market Issues, edited by Marjorie Griffin Cohen and Jane Pulkingham.; *Angels of the Workplace: Women and the Construction of Gender Relations in the Canadian Clothing Industry, 1890-1940*, by Mercedes Steedman; *Women, Religion, and the Atlantic World (1600-1800)*, edited by Daniella Kostroun and Lisa Vallendorf.

Call for Submissions for "Eco Poetry". Report on CV2 *The Canadian Journal of Poetry and Critical Writing, Special Issue on Eco Poetry*.

Where Are We Now: Margins and Moves in Women's Writings", An Inaugural Carol Shields Symposium on Women's Writing, May 8-10, 2009.

Review of *The Fountain of Age*, by Betty Friedan.

Call for Submissions: Capturing Our History: Feminism in Canada and Quebec, 1960-

2010/Retracer notre histoire: le mouvement féministe au Canada et au Québec, 1960 a 2010.

The project: To publish a series of books—one per year beginning in 2010—that depict the richness and diversity of feminist activity in Canada and Quebec between 1960 and 2010. They will be written by different authors and may include autobiographies, biographies, single-and multi-themed volumes, edited collections, plays, novels, etc. The complexities of gender, race, class, geography, culture, dis/ability, language, sexual identity, and age are central to the project.

Office Inventory, of Feminist Caucus Archives, as of Summer, 2008.

Box 1 *Feminism And The Language Of Love* 1999. 145 out of a total of 235 copies.

Box 2 *Feminism And The Language Of Love* 1999, 90 copies out of 235 copies.

Sexual Disorientations 1997 16 copies.

Our Sisters In Spirit 2006 1 copy.

Women & Violence 1992 5 copies.

Belles Lettres/Beautiful Letters 1994 1 copy.

Stats Memos & Memory 1982 8 copies

Women & Violence 1993 5 copies

Inviting The Incubus, Kissing The Succubi: The Female Muse 2005 6 copies

Reviewing: Women, Writing On Writing 10 copies

Box 3 *Language(s)/Prison(s)* 1998 49 copies

O(Pen)ings: Feminism And Postmodernism 2000 10 copies.

Master Copies:

Stats Memos & Memory 1982

Beautiful Letters 1994

Two Women Talking 1985-87.

Urban/Rural: Women, Writing & Place 1995

Reinventing Memory & Silences 1992

What Is A Nice Feminist?

Going Santa Fe (?)

Living Archives Brochure

Illegitimate Positions 1987

Reviewing: Women On Writing 1996.

Box 4 *And No One Know The Blood We Share*

2005. 72 copies

The Eco Poetry Panel, Friday, 12 June, 2009, at
SFU Harbour Centre, Segal Centre, 1:45-3:15 p.m.

Anne Burke, Chair and Panelist

Magie Dominic, Organizer and Panelist

Cathy Ford, Panelist

Andrea Nicki, Panelist

Catherine Owen, Panelist